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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 SIL-01

EA-07 DHA-02 ARA-06 PC-01 SCA-01 /112 W
---------- 030518
R 060930Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4878
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MAPUTO 0886

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGEN, EGEN, SGEN, MZ
SUBJ: MOZAMBIQUE ASSESSMENT

1. COMMENCING WITH THIS TELEGRAM THE EMBASSY WILL SUBMIT A SERIES OF TELEGRAMS ASSESSING HOW THE NEW MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT HAS FARED DURING ITS FIRST YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND WHERE IT APPEARS TO BE HEADING. THIS TELEGRAM CONTAINS OUR SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. IN COMING TELEGRAMS WE WILL DISCUSS:

A. WHO WIELDS POWER: PERSONALITIES, THE ARMY AND THE PARTY

B. INTERNAL STABILITY AND DISSIDENCE

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C. DOMESTIC POLICY GOALS AND PERFORMANCE

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D. STATE OF THE ECONOMY

E. FOREIGN POLICY GOALS AND PERFORMANCE

F. RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS

G. US/MOZAMBIQUE RELATIONS

2. CAVEAT: THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN MOZAMBIQUE IS SPOTTY AND SPARSE. COMING OFF TEN YEARS OF VERY LIMITED CONTACTS WITH THE FRELIMO LEADERS, WE HAVE HAD TO START ALMOST FROM SCRATCH IN DEVELOPING INFORMATION ABOUT THE FRELIMO GOVERNMENT. ACCESS TO OFFICIALS IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. IT IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH FOR US TO MEET MINISTERS IN THEIR OFFICES; OUTSIDE THE OFFICE IT IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. WHEN WE DO GET TO THEM, MOZAMBICANS ARE EXTREMELY TIGHT-LIPPED. THIS IS TRUE

FOR ALL DIPLOMATS AND FOREIGNERS, WHICH LIMITS THE ACQUISITION OF SECOND-HAND INFORMATION AS WELL. MOREOVER, INFORMATION THAT WE DO ACQUIRE IS USUALLY ONE-SIDED. THE LOCAL MEDIA ARE OSTENSIBLY INDEPENDENT, BUT PARROT THE PARTY LINE AND DO NOT CHALLENGE OR CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT POLICY. THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND RHODESIANS ARE EAGER TO FERRET OUT THE NEWS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SUPPRESSES, BUT MUCH OF THE REPORTING ON MOZAMBIQUE FROM THESE COUNTRIES IS DISTORTED AND AT TIMES PATENTLY FALSE. THUS THE TASK OF ASSESSING WHAT IS GOING ON IN MOZAMBIQUE IS DIFFICULT. IT IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SO FOR SOME TIME.

3. SUMMARY AND CONSLUSIONS

A. PRESIDENT MACHEL IS CLEARLY THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF MOZAMBIQUE. AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, THE ARMY, AND FRELIMO, HE WIELDS ENORMOUS POWER AND COMPLETELY OVERSHADOWS HIS THREE CLOSEST ASSOCIATES AND POTENTIAL RIVALS -- VICE PRESIDENT OF FRELIMO MARCELINO DOS SANTOS, MINISTER OF INTERIOR ARMANDO
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GUEBUZA AND FOREIGN MINISTER JOAQUIM CHISSANO.

B. DESPITE RUMORS OF DISSIDENCE IN THE NORTH AMONG THE MAKONDE AND THE SHORT-LIVED ARMY MUTINY IN DECEMBER 1975, THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE IN FIRM CONTROL THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THERE ARE POCKETS OF TRIBAL AND REGIONAL DISGRUNTLEMENT AND SEVERE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INCLUDING SIZEABLE UNEMPLOYMENT

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IN MAPUTO AND BEIRA, BUT THESE DO NOT AS YET SERIOUSLY THREATEN THE REGIME. HOWEVER, GIVEN FURTHER ECONOMIC DETERIORATION, RISING UNEMPLOYMENT, AND CONTINUED TRIBAL IMBALANCE AND POOR PAY IN THE MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT, FUTURE CHALLENGES TO MACHEL'S LEADER-SHIP CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

C. WHILE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS ARE STILL BEING ARTICULATED, THE BASIC DIRECTION OF MACHEL'S POLICIES IS CLEAR. AT HOME, HE WANTS TO ELIMINATE ALL VESTIGES OF PORTUGUESE COLONIAL RULE AND TO CREATE IN ITS STEAD A "REVOLUTIONARY" SOCIETY, DRAWING HEAVILY ON MARXIST IDEOLOGY AND TANZANIAN EXPERIENCE. IN FOREIGN POLICY, HE WANTS MAJORITY RULE THROUGHOUT AFRICA UNDER LIKE-MINDED REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP. FOR MACHEL, REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IS AS IMPORTANT AS LIBERATION.

D. DESPITE HIS STRONG IDEOLOGICAL BENT, MACHEL CAN BE PRAGMATIC. WHILE DETESTING THE "RACIST REGIME" IN SOUTH AFRICA, HE CONTINUES TO LET TRANSVAAL GOODS TRANSIT MAPUTO, TO PERMIT MOZAMBICANS TO BE RECRUITED FOR WORK IN SOUTH AFRICAN MINES AND TO AUTHORIZE POWER FROM THE CABORA BASSA DAM TO GO TO SOUTH AFRICA. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, HE HAS OCCASIONALLY DEPARTED FROM HIS ANTI-CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY TO HELP EASE THE TRANSITION TO HIS NEW SOCIETY. BUT THESE MAY BE CONCESSIONS FOR THE MOMENT. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT IN THE END WE WILL FIND THAT HE IS DRIVEN MORE BY IDEOLOGY THAN BY PRAGMATISM.

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EA-07 DHA-02 ARA-06 PC-01 SCA-01 /112 W
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R 060930Z AUG 76
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MAPUTO 0886

E. ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MACHEL IDENTIFIES WITH HIS "NATURAL ALLIES", THE COMMUNIST AND NON-ALGINED RADICALS. BUT HE IS HIS OWN MASTER. ALTHOUGH HE IS TRYING TO INSTALL A MARXIST SOCIETY IN MOZAMBIQUE, IT IS HIS CHOICE, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY OUTSIDE DIRECTION. WE BELIEVE HE WILL STOP SHORT OF GRANTING THE SOVIETS MILITARY BASES IN MOZAMBIQUE. WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO JUDGE WHETHER HE FAVORS THE SOVIETS OR THE CHINESE: WE WOULD GUESS THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM. NONETHELESS, THE FORTUNES OF THE SOVIETS HAVE IMPORVED THIS LAST YEAR, THANKS IN PART TO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE MPLA IN ANGOLA. THE CHINESE DO NOT APPEAR TO BE ALARMED, AND SEEM MORE INTERESTED IN THE LONG HAUL, CONFIDENT THAT THE SOVIETS WILL OVERPLAY THEIR
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HAND.

F. WE BELIEVE THAT OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO MACHEL, MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN BLACK AFRICA, WILL DETERMINE THE PACE AND DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE CLOSING OF MOZAMBIQUE'S BORDER WITH RHODESIA IN MARCH 1976, AS WELL AS HIS EFFORTS TO CREATE A NEW "THIRD FORCE" LEADERSHIP FOR THE ZIM-BABWEAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, DEMONSTRATE THAT HE CAN ACT DECISIVELY. GEOGRAPHY GIVES MACHEL A BIG ADVANTAGE. IT IS IN MOZAMBIQUE THAT THE ZIMBABWEAN BASES ARE LOCATED; IT IS FROM MOZAMBIQUE THAT MOST OF THE RAIDS INTO RHODESIA ARE LAUNCHED; AND, IT IS THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE THAT THE ARMS MUST PASS FOR THE ZIMBABWEAN GUERILLAS. FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS TO MOZAMBIQUE THAT ZIMBABWEAN POLITICAL LEADERS ARE BEING DRAWN EVEN THOUGH THEY CHAFE UNDER RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT.

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IF THE CUBANS ARE INVITED TO PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE
IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE, IT IS MORE LIKELY
TO BE MACHEL RATHER THAN NYERERE OR KAUNDA WHO WILL
URGE THEIR ENTRY. MACHEL KNOWS THAT HE IS IN THE
ASCENDANCY AND IS DETERMINED TO MAKE THE MOST OF
HIS ADVANTAGE.

G. OWING IN PART TO MOZAMBIQUE'S UNHAPPINESS
WITH US POLICY DURING ITS LIBERATION STRUGGLE, THERE
WAS A DELAY IN ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE US AND MOZAMBIUUE. AT THE MOMENT, THE
TWO GOVERNMENTS ARE "FEELING EACH OTHER OUT".
THE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT STILL HAS STRONG SUS-
PICIONS OF US MOTIVES AND POLICIES, INCLUDING OUR
NEW SOUTHERN AFRICA INITIATIVES. THEIR SUSPICIONSO
HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE HOLD CONGRESS HAS
PLACED ON OUR $12.5 MILLION AID OFFER. WE IN
TURN ARE NOT AT ALL CERTAIN HOW FAR WE MAY WANT TO
GO IN ESTABLISHING CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT
OF MOZAMBIQUE. THE CONTINUED DETENTION OF AMERICAN
MISSIONARY, ARMAND DOLL, WILL HAMPER EFFORTS TO IM-
PROVE RELATIONS. EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES,
IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS IS LIKELY TO BE SLOW AT BEST.
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